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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Spirit of God, who brought creation out of the void, light from darkness, and order from chaos, everything under Heaven belongs to You. Lord, use our lawmakers for Your glory. May their daily experiences of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, victory and defeat, bring honor to Your Name. Remind our Senators that no evil can stop the unfolding of Your purposes and providence. Lead them this day with Your merciful hands, providing for their needs. Bless all who labor for liberty, protecting them with the shield of Your love.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROMNEY). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will pro-

ceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Paul B. Matey, of New Jersey, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President I ask unanimous consent to speak for 1 minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SECRET HOLDS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, it is Sunshine Week, and I support transparency throughout government. The public's business ought to be public. That includes right here in the U.S. Senate.

My newer colleagues might be unaware that the Senate has banned what are referred to as secret holds. Since January 2011, a standing order has been in effect, requiring that Senators make public any hold they place on bills or nominations.

A Senator, of course, has a right to withhold consent when unanimous consent is needed to move to a measure. However, there is absolutely no right to do so in secret. The public's business ought to be done in public.

That is why Senator WYDEN and I sent a letter to all Senators reminding them of this standing order that we authored requiring disclosure of holds.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 1 more minute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. When Senators spend most of their time on the Senate floor, as they used to before the Senate was on television, it was easy for any Senator to stand up and say "I object," if consent were asked for any motion or any nomination. Now we spend most of our time in committee hearings and meeting with those we represent. We rely on our party leadership to protect

our rights, and we sometimes tell them if we need someone to object on our behalf to moving a bill or a nominee. That happens to be called a hold. A hold should not be secret, I want everybody to know that sometimes I put holds on nominations or bills.

Whoever heard of shouting "I object" in secret? A hold, in other words, ought to be public, as the standing order requires. The Senate affirmed that in the year 2011 by adopting a permanent standing order that Senator WYDEN and I wrote. I remind my colleagues, that standing order is still in place.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE GREEN NEW DEAL

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, in the last couple of weeks, I have come to the floor for a few short comments on the Green New Deal. I have compared it to the New Deal of the Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration and its attempt to get us out of the Depression with the New Deal then.

In his 1932 campaign for President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt called for what he called a "bold persistent experimentation." That is a pretty good description of the New Deal. It wasn't a very cohesive plan, but it was a collection of disconnected policies. In that sense, the Green New Deal emulates its namesake. It, too, is kind of a collection of disconnected policies.

The New Deal of the 1930s failed to pull the economy out of the Depression that actually ended at the beginning of World War II. It is not surprising, however, that it didn't pull us out of the Depression because it didn't create economic growth. Economic growth needs

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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predictable and sensible tax and regulatory policies. We have seen the fruits of this approach under the Trump administration. So let's not, through the Green Deal, kill the goose that laid the golden egg.

The Green New Deal is both breathtaking in its professed ambitions and, quite frankly, laughably weak. It is just a resolution calling on the government to enact a whole range of policies.

Then, why not introduce a bill that actually does something rather than a resolution calling for future implausible actions?

It is supposed to be about protecting the environment. As someone with a track record of real bipartisan achievements that have resulted in a cleaner environment, I don't get it. If you want to know my credentials there, I am the father of the wind energy tax credit, just as an example. We get 38 percent of our electricity from wind in Iowa.

What do universal healthcare—another item of the Green New Deal—or free college tuition or a Federal jobs guarantee program have to do with the environment anyway? All of those things are in the Green New Deal.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader is recognized.

DECLARATION OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY

Mr. SCHUMER. By the end of this week, the Senate will vote on a resolution to terminate the President's emergency declaration. I have laid out the number of reasons why the Senate must vote to terminate. The President has not demonstrated that an emergency exists. During the announcement of the declaration, the President said he "didn't need to do this." A few weeks later, 58 former national security officials, including former Secretaries of State and Defense, said there was "no factual basis" for an emergency declaration. For the sake of the facts, the Senate must vote to terminate.

We also have no idea which military construction projects might be on the chopping block. Republican Senators who vote against this declaration do so at their own peril. They may be voting to deprive necessary funds from military installations in their States. For the sake of the brave men and women of our Armed Forces, the Senate must vote to terminate.

Of course, the constitutional questions loom largest. The President failed to convince Congress, the American people, and, perhaps most glaringly, Mexico to pay for his border

wall. Now he is attempting to use emergency powers to subvert the will of Congress. If allowed to stand, this emergency declaration would be a defacement of our constitutional order and one of the largest power grabs for the executive branch in the more than 200 years this Nation has been in existence.

My colleagues must contemplate the possibility that if President Trump were to succeed with his phony emergency declaration, future Presidents would have a precedent to claim emergencies whenever Congress failed to endorse their policies. In effect, Congress would no longer be a coequal branch of government. It would change the balance of power rather dramatically in ways the Founding Fathers would never have contemplated. In fact, it would horrify many of the Founding Fathers, who were so worried about an overweening Executive in the personage of King George.

I know many of my Republican friends are afraid to cross the President. We know he can be vindictive. I know that several support the idea of building a wall but want to oppose the emergency declaration. I would say to my colleagues respectfully: You have been able to express your support for a border wall numerous times in the past Congress and in this one. Another amendment vote will accomplish nothing new; it will only poison Congress's ability to pass this resolution.

This is not about policy at our southern border; this is about one thing and one thing alone—Presidential overreach.

Later this week, the Senate ought to vote a clean resolution to terminate the emergency. The bottom line is very simple: If we were upholding the Constitution, it would be 100 to nothing against the emergency. If there were no politics, no fear, no worry about crossing a President, the vote would be 100 to nothing. If people read the Federalist Papers and the Constitution and what the Founding Fathers intended, the vote would be 100 to nothing. I hope it is as close to that as is possible.

BUDGET PROPOSAL

Mr. President, earlier today, the Trump administration released its annual request. In recent years, these budget requests have become statements of principles and priorities rather than working documents. Purely as a statement of principle, the latest budget proposal from the Trump administration is not only extremely disturbing, but it is totally against what the President talks about when he talks to his supporters.

The budget request we received today would be a gut punch to the middle class and a handout to powerful special interests and the wealthiest few. It would dismantle America's healthcare system as we know it, and it would dramatically widen the gap in income and wealth between our Nation's richest citizens and the rest.

Now listen to this: The President talks about how he wants to get better healthcare for Americans. Certainly our Republican colleagues do. By cutting healthcare coverage and increasing healthcare costs for millions of Americans, this budget belies those promises. President Trump's budget would repeal the entire Affordable Care Act, taking away insurance from 32 million Americans and eliminating protections for Americans with preexisting conditions. How many Republicans are for that?

How about this: \$1.5 trillion in cuts to Medicaid, \$845 billion in cuts to Medicare, \$506 billion in cuts to tax credits that help lower income Americans afford insurance. Not only is this cruel, it is hypocritical. It is against everything our Republican friends talk about. It is against what the President says. He is going to preserve Medicare and Medicaid, and then he slashes them. It still befuddles me how he can get away with this even in these times.

Second, the budget slashes domestic programs, including investments in infrastructure, housing, education, and the environment—a third of the EPA budget and one-fifth of the Department of Transportation budget.

My Republican friends, when your commissioners and Governors come to you and say they need more highway funds, are you going to support a budget that cuts them by 20 percent?

On top of all this, it gives more tax breaks to the wealthiest few. It would permanently extend the Trump tax cuts, costing \$1.9 trillion over 10 years. Seventy percent of the benefits go to the top one-fifth of America. The staggering costs of these tax cuts are the reason for all the proposed cuts to healthcare and infrastructure. The Trump budget proposes the blind theft of the middle class to line America's deepest pockets.

It is really a disgraceful budget. My guess is that Mr. Mulvaney at OMB put it together. He was one of the five most rightwing people in the Congress. He wanted to slash everything. The President just green-stamped it so he can tip his hat to those on the very far right.

The vast majority of the President's supporters—they are a dwindling number; they are now less than a third of America—don't support this. They don't support this at all. How many people who count themselves as supporters of President Trump support cutting Medicare by close to \$1 trillion? How many of those who consider themselves supporters of Trump support cutting Medicaid by \$1.5 trillion? How many of the President's closest supporters think we should eliminate protections for preexisting conditions when people have them? How many of the President's supporters want to cut infrastructure by one-fifth or cut the clean water and clean air budget by one-third? Hardly any. This budget is just sort of an "Alice in Wonderland" document.

Of course, it wouldn't be a Trump budget if it didn't include the fantasy of another \$8.6 billion in funding for the border wall. The fiction that Mexico would pay for the wall has long been debunked, although that is what the President ran on, but it is still amazing that the Trump administration proposes year after year that the American taxpayer pay billions of dollars for a border wall that President Trump said would be completely free.

It is difficult to overstate the callousness of President Trump's budget. The cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and numerous middle-class programs are devastating but maybe not surprising. This budget will be on the backs of the Republicans. They support President Trump.

The Republican Party's systematic efforts to rip away Americans' healthcare, its continued embrace of the tax cuts for the rich, its refusal to accept science, facts, and the urgent need to address climate change have made cruel and unthinkable budget proposals like this one par for the course with our fellow Republicans. It is sad; it is a shame; and it basically is total hypocrisy because not one single Republican would campaign on these proposals.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, this week the Senate will vote on three controversial nominees, including two circuit court judges: Paul Matey for the Third Circuit and Neomi Rao for the DC Circuit, the second most powerful court in the country.

Mr. Matey's nomination, in keeping with Leader MCCONNELL just ripping apart whatever bipartisanship we have left, has advanced without a blue slip from either home State Senator, Mr. BOOKER or Mr. MENENDEZ. In case it wasn't clear how little Republicans care about this once-vaunted tradition, Mr. Matey has skipped even the courtesy of meeting with Senator MENENDEZ.

Mr. Matey has never made an oral argument before a Federal Court of Appeals—never. He barely has any litigation experience either. He has spent most of his career as a political aide to Governor Christie. Yet he is nominated for a lifetime appointment to a circuit court of appeals, not even a district court, where his qualifications would still be questionable, but to a circuit court.

Ms. Neomi Rao, despite her experience, might even be worse. As the Trump administration's regulatory czar, she has been in charge of rolling back consumer protections, environmental protections, and healthcare protections. So as a nominee for the DC Circuit, which hears cases on Federal regulation, Ms. Rao is hopelessly compromised. Yet she refused to commit to recusing herself from regulatory matters on which she has worked when pressed by Senator FEINSTEIN during the Judiciary hearing.

That is to say nothing of Ms. Rao's alarming views. In past writings, Ms.

Rao has expressed skepticism about climate change, called sexual and racial oppression "myths," and argued that independent Federal Agencies are unconstitutional. Perhaps worst of all, she has implied that sexual assault victims are to blame for the despicable crimes committed against them.

Honestly, where do my Republican colleagues find these people? The majority party always nominates judges that have a particular bent, but the Trump administration's nominees, by and large, are not mainstream conservatives; they are rightwing ideologues, many of whom lack the experience, candor, and moderation that we would expect in a public servant, let alone a lifetime judge. For a few of these judges, the sole qualification is not their judicial experience, not their knowledge or erudition, but they are active members of the Federalist Society.

I know this is what my friend the majority leader cares about: a hard-right bench. He doesn't care about their qualifications; he doesn't care about moderation; he doesn't care about representing middle-class people when he nominates these judges. He is running a conveyor belt of political partisans, many with extremely thin legal resumes, onto the courts. He gets a talking point for his base, but the quality of these nominees degrades the Federal bench and cheapens the cause of justice in America.

I will vote no on both Mr. Matey and Ms. Rao, and I strongly urge my colleagues to do the same.

CHINA TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. President, finally, on China—the ongoing negotiations with China have been something I have been following closely. Over the past few weeks, there has been a drumbeat of reporting that the Trump administration is poised to accept a weak trade agreement with China.

Last week, the New York Times reported that China's draft new foreign investment law, meant to pacify the United States, would not include a complete end to the forced technology transfers. The most recent published draft made no mention of preventing national government regulators from demanding technology transfers. This morning, the Times reported that China has agreed to few, if any, major restrictions on how it manages its currency.

For years, China manipulated its currency to suit its purposes, typically devaluing the renminbi to prop up its manufacturers. I was the first, with Senator GRAHAM of South Carolina, back in the early 2000s, to point out China's currency manipulation, and it has continued unabated. In recent days the renminbi has been allowed to rise, but, curiously, it fell 10 percent against the dollar after President Trump's announcement on tariffs.

According to the Times, that move alone negated, at least temporarily, the impact of President Trump's latest

round of tariffs. The Chinese have done everything they can to gain advantage over us, to steal our jobs, steal our wealth. They have not played fairly, and now the President, with his tariffs, has them where we would want them.

They need to come to an agreement. But they are hanging tough, and the President's inclinations seem to be, from press reports, to back off so he can get any deal, so the stock market will go up temporarily. Make no mistake about it—in the long run, this will hurt America dramatically. The best paying jobs will be created in China, not here. The ability of the best American companies to compete worldwide will be dramatically curtailed.

It is abundantly clear that China is playing us. They want to give up as little as possible while getting out from under the sting of tariffs.

So I say to President Trump, whom I have praised on his China policies thus far—a lot tougher, a lot better than President Obama or President Bush. I say to President Trump: Do not get played. If you don't achieve what you set out to achieve, namely, the permanent reform of China's most abusive trade practices, then walk away, just as you walked away from North Korea when Chairman Kim would not make real commitments.

President Trump, you must walk away from China if President Xi refuses meaningful and enduring economic reforms. To do otherwise would be to squander maybe the last best chance of putting American workers and businesses on a level playing field with our No. 1 economic competitor.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HAWLEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

SOCIALISM

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, in thinking about some of the debates swirling about here in Washington, DC, as to whether capitalism or socialism should be a preferred economic model, I recall a story that involves Boris Yeltsin, who went on to become the Russian President, who happened to be in Houston, TX, in 1989, visiting the Johnson Space Center—a very important part of NASA in Houston—when he decided to visit a grocery store in Clear Lake, TX. Though it sounds like it could be, this isn't the beginning of a Wes Anderson film.

It was nearly 20 years ago, in 1989, when the Soviet Union had not yet imploded and when the Berlin Wall was still standing. It would be 2 years before Yeltsin would be forced to take steps to begin to transform the Soviet

economy. As I said, he was in the Houston area, finishing a tour of the Johnson Space Center, when he made an unscheduled stop at a Randalls grocery store before he headed to Miami.

The Houston Chronicle reported at the time that Yeltsin gawked at the abundant produce, the selection of fresh fish, the checkout aisle, and especially the frozen pudding pops. He roamed the aisles, according to the story, stared at the frozen food section, and took advantage of the free samples of cheese. He actually talked to some of the customers there and asked questions about what they were buying and how much it cost them. He was stunned—absolutely stunned—as this was a far cry from the grocery stores in the Soviet Union. Yeltsin said: “Even the Politburo doesn’t have this kind of choice, not even Mr. Gorbachev.”

That day, Boris Yeltsin learned something that the overwhelming majority of people in our country already know—that socialism cannot provide the bounty, the prosperity, or the choices that capitalism can.

Leon Aron, who wrote Yeltsin’s biography, quoted one of his associates.

He said:

For a long time, on the plane to Miami, he sat motionless, his head in his hands. “What have they done to our poor people?” he said, after a long silence.

He told his fellow countrymen who were traveling with him that if their people were to see the conditions in American supermarkets, “there would be a revolution.”

Make no mistake about it. If the most radical Democrats in our country today get their way on the outlandish socialist policies they are pushing, the American people will be calling for a revolution.

The Green New Deal, Medicare for All, and economic security for those who are able-bodied yet who are unwilling to work are policies that are not going to raise up the most economically disadvantaged people in our country. They are going to pull everyone else down. Socialism promises not prosperity for all but what Winston Churchill called the equal sharing of miseries.

Though these self-proclaimed democratic socialists make big promises on how their policies will deliver fairness and equality for all Americans, that could not be further from the truth. The first thing these policies would do is to bankrupt our country. These unworkable economic policies will kill jobs and outlaw our most reliable, affordable energy sources. “Medicare for All” will turn into “Medicare for none” when the entire system crashes and when those who are unwilling to work will lose any incentive to even try. It would subsidize a nation of slackers.

This threat of the seductive embrace of socialism isn’t an exaggeration. Some of our friends across the aisle are actually critical of the equal opportunity, “pulling yourself up by your bootstraps,” hard-working economic

system that has made our country the envy of the world. They say: You didn’t create your success; the government did—what a bunch of hooley.

Over the weekend, one Democratic Member of the House who was speaking at South by Southwest in Austin, my hometown, referred to capitalism as “irredeemable” and tried to blame capitalism for every problem that exists in our society. I admit that we are not perfect, but capitalism isn’t the cause of every problem that exists in our society. Of all places to complain about the perils of capitalism, there is more than a little irony in her having chosen Texas—the most successful, free-enterprise economy in our Nation.

Instead of talking about this socialist, Big Government approach that we all know will fail, let’s look at how the Texas model has led my State to become an economic powerhouse and the envy of the Nation.

We keep taxes low, government spending restrained, and regulations at a rational minimum to give people and the small businesses that provide jobs the freedom to pursue their dreams and to prosper. I must say that it is obvious that it is working. The unemployment rate in Texas is 4 percent, which is among the lowest in the Nation. In Midland—in the Permian Basin, the heart of the energy boom in my State—unemployment is 2.1 percent. You are hard-pressed to find anybody to take the jobs that do exist because, essentially, everybody who is willing to work is fully employed. The biggest problem that job creators have is getting the workers they need. Yet there is a silver lining for the workers. This pushes wages higher as businesses compete for their labor.

Last week, the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis released international trade data that showed Texas, for the 17th year in a row, as the top State for exports. We make stuff, and we sell stuff. We grow things. We raise cattle and agricultural products, and we sell them. We are the top State for exports. In fact, our exports account for nearly 20 percent of the exports of the entire Nation. In 2018, that totaled more than \$315 billion of exports—more than double that of California’s, which is the second highest exporter. These earnings not only fuel the economy of our State, but they boost the entire Nation.

Our export dominance is only part of the reason Texas is thriving. Together, with lower taxes and less burdensome regulation, businesses and dream seekers are drawn to our State, which creates opportunities for everyone who is willing to work. Instead of growing government and increasing the tax burden, we allow businesses—small, medium, and large—to invest in their workforces, in our communities, and in our way of life.

In Texas, we believe that less government is more. We don’t try to centralize power in the statehouse. We give businesses, entrepreneurs, and

hard-working Texans of all backgrounds, ethnicities, and races the freedom by which they can create their own opportunities. We know that the more you tax, the more there are government controls and that the more you regulate, the greater the burden is on new ideas, investment, and opportunity.

The socialist policies being espoused by some members of the Democratic Party are not going to make our businesses and our economy stronger or more competitive. Indeed, history has shown that these are failed policies that will stifle innovation, discourage hard work, and make us look more like that 1980s Soviet grocery store.

Instead of our grocery stores being filled with a selection of beautiful produce, fresh meat, your favorite snack foods, they will be stocked with whatever the government says it wants you to have. Instead of making an appointment with your doctor when you are sick, you will wait for Lord knows how long to get an appointment with a government-run clinic and have few, if any, options. Instead of forcing ourselves out of bed in the morning to go to work, people who are able but who don’t want to work will stay in bed, knowing they can receive food and medical care that will be subsidized by your labor and your hard-earned tax dollars.

That is what these old—but now, somehow, dressed up as something new—failed ideas that have been proposed by our Democratic colleagues would do. Forget government “of the people, by the people, and for the people.” They want a country by the government, for the government—the people be damned.

In his autobiography, Yeltsin wrote: “When I saw those shelves crammed with hundreds, thousands of cans, cartons and goods of every possible sort, for the first time I felt quite frankly sick with despair for the Soviet people . . . that such a potentially super-rich country as ours has been brought to a state of such poverty.”

I pray that our country never sees that day when it is brought to ruin because of these 21st century socialists.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

S. 659

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss Senate bill, S. 659, the Biologic Patent Transparency Act. This bill would help encourage competition in the prescription drug marketplace and begin to put an end to the harmful patent strategies that block new drugs from coming to market. I am pleased to be sponsoring this legislation with my friend and colleague

from Virginia, Senator TIM KAINE, as well as with Senators PORTMAN, SHAHEEN, BRAUN, and STABENOW, all of whom have joined us as original co-sponsors.

Prescription drugs are vital to the health and well-being of Americans, especially our Nation's seniors, 90 percent of whom take at least one prescription drug in any given month. Developing these medicines is a lengthy, expensive, and uncertain process. It often takes more than a decade and can cost billions of dollars to bring a new drug from the laboratory to the patient. Most drugs fail during the clinical trials. If we want new medicines to reach consumers who need them, the companies that invest in this research and development and take the risks necessary must see a fair return on their investment.

To encourage such investments, Congress grants inventors limited periods of patent protection during which their products are legally shielded from competition. Rewarding these investments has proven to be beneficial to many Americans. The past century could be termed the "Age of Miracle Drugs," with discoveries such as insulin and penicillin, and treatments for cancer, heart disease, HIV, and other serious medical conditions. Today, however, we might well define a "miracle drug" as one that has not doubled in price since the last refill.

Although our country leads the world in prescription drug innovation, we also lead the world in drug spending. According to one estimate, U.S. spending on prescription drugs will reach between \$580 billion and \$610 billion by the year 2021. In 2017, Americans spent more than \$330 billion on retail prescription drugs, and nearly one-quarter of individuals surveyed reported difficulties paying for the cost of their prescription medications.

How well I remember standing in the pharmacy line several months ago behind a couple who were informed by the pharmacist that their copay would be \$111. The husband turned to his wife and said: "Honey, we just can't afford that." They then turned around, left their prescription on the counter, and left the pharmacy. I asked the pharmacist how often that happens, and he told me, "Every day." That is the kind of onerous burden too many Americans are facing, and it's causing them to forgo fulfilling a prescription, to stretch out doses, or simply to choose to buy the medicine and short themselves on food or be late in paying their rent or mortgage.

Among the most expensive drugs on the market today are biologics. These are incredibly promising drugs for the health and well-being of many Americans. They have revolutionized treatment for many serious and life-threatening conditions, from diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis to cancer and multiple sclerosis.

Today, fewer than 2 percent of Americans use biologics, yet biologics ac-

count for nearly 40 percent of total spending on prescription drugs. Last year, the Senate Aging Committee, which I chair and which the Presiding Officer is a member of, held a hearing to examine the price increases for one of these groundbreaking treatments. HUMIRA, the world's best-selling prescription drug, is a biologic that was first approved for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis by the Food and Drug Administration, the FDA, in 2002. In 2017, U.S. sales of this product generated an astonishing \$12.3 billion in revenue for the drug's manufacturer.

Now, HUMIRA is truly a miracle drug for many patients. It is used to treat a variety of conditions, ranging from rheumatoid arthritis to Crohn's disease to ulcerative colitis and plaque psoriasis. So a wide range of diseases and conditions are responsive to HUMIRA. According to various reports, more than 200 patent applications have been filed for HUMIRA, with nearly 90 percent of those filed after HUMIRA was first approved by the FDA in 2002.

According to the manufacturer's CEO, more than 130 patents are included in HUMIRA's patent portfolio today. Protections provided by these patents can block competition and extend the drug's market monopoly until the year 2034. Keep in mind that this is for a drug that was first approved in 2002. We're talking about extending the patents until 2034.

HUMIRA has increased in price yet again this year, and although biosimilars have been approved by the FDA, patent litigation is blamed for keeping these lower cost alternatives from reaching the market. And HUMIRA is not the only biologic to be protected by such an extensive portfolio of patents—what we call a "patent thicket."

Enabling the creation, approval, and marketing of competitive biological products must be among our top priorities when we consider ways to reduce the healthcare costs of Americans.

The Biologic Patent Transparency Act is an important step Congress can take to shine light on the patent thickets that protect these biologics and to stop some of the gaming that has prevented consumers from accessing lower cost, FDA-approved products.

So what will our bill do? It has three major components. First, our bill would require manufacturers to disclose to the FDA the web of patents that protect their approved biologics from competition by biosimilar manufacturers—a process that we already know works. It has worked remarkably well for the small molecule drugs that are governed by the Hatch-Waxman Act of 1984. Although generics accounted for only 13 percent of U.S. prescriptions immediately before the Hatch-Waxman Act was passed, today they make up 90 percent. These generics often cost 70 to 90 percent less than the branded product. They have significantly reduced costs and expanded access to necessary treatments

for Americans. According to one estimate, generics have saved consumers more than \$1.6 trillion in drug costs over the last decade.

Second, our bill would tackle the patent strategies that are intentionally designed to block competition by limiting the enforceability of late-filed patents against biosimilar manufacturers that have already filed applications with the FDA.

According to one estimate, over 70 of the patents covering HUMIRA were applied for and granted within three years prior to the expiration of the initial patents.

So here's what is happening. A manufacturer of a wildly successful drug sees that its patents are about to expire and that a competitor—a biosimilar manufacturer—is on the way to getting approval by the FDA for its product. So what that original brand manufacturer does is make small alterations, frequently, in the product. It doesn't change the product in a dramatic way. It doesn't come up with a brand new medicine, but it changes it ever so slightly or decides to patent an aspect of it that was not previously patented. The whole purpose is to prevent that biosimilar manufacturer from bringing to market a more affordable product that consumers could access. That is just wrong. That is not what patents are intended for. And as I made clear earlier in my statement, I support a limited period of exclusivity for the innovator manufacturer. I think we should reward that investment in research and development and clinical trials, which is often very expensive. But it is not right for the patent system to be gamed this way, for it to be exploited and for last-minute patents to be filed for the sole purpose of precluding a competitor from coming to market with a less expensive, equivalent drug.

Restricting the enforcement of these late-filed patents that are filed after the application by the biosimilar manufacturer has been filed with the FDA will still protect the important investments made by the manufacturers, while encouraging the biosimilar manufacturers to bring important innovations to consumers sooner and at a lower cost.

Finally, the third part of our bill would require the FDA to regularly publish specific information related to approved biologic products, making it easier for prospective competitors to evaluate and plan for the development and introduction of biosimilars.

In addition to the name and patent information for all approved biological products, our bill would require the FDA to publish information including the drug's marketing status, applicable reference products, periods of exclusivity, biosimilar or interchangeable products, and approved indications for usage. The FDA will be required to regularly update this information as well, so that it is readily available and up-to-date. So what this will do is allow

the biosimilar manufacturer to go to what is known as the "Purple Book" at the FDA, take a look at the drug it wishes to compete with, and learn what existing patents are there, how long they are going to be in effect, and plan accordingly.

America's system of protecting innovation has provided our citizens with tremendous benefits, especially in the area of pharmaceuticals. Of that there can be no doubt. We must provide pharmaceutical manufacturers with the ability to recoup their investments, but at the same time, we cannot be blind to the costs of these drugs, nor to cases where patent laws are manipulated to preserve monopolies and prevent lower cost, equivalent drugs from coming to market. Passing the Biologic Patent Transparency Act is a major step we can take to put a stop to the patent-gaming that blocks consumers from accessing lower cost drugs. I encourage my colleagues to support this crucial legislation.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

Seeing no one seeking recognition, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Paul B. Matey, of New Jersey, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, David Perdue, Roy Blunt, John Cornyn, Joni Ernst, Lindsey Graham, John Boozman, Mike Rounds, Thom Tillis, Steve Daines, James E. Risch, John Hoeven, Mike Crapo, Shelley Moore Capito, John Thune, Pat Roberts, Jerry Moran.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Paul B. Matey, of New Jersey, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 41 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Alexander	Ernst	Portman
Barrasso	Fischer	Risch
Blackburn	Gardner	Roberts
Blunt	Grassley	Romney
Boozman	Hawley	Rounds
Braun	Hoeven	Rubio
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Isakson	Scott (SC)
Collins	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cotton	Lankford	Thune
Cramer	Lee	Tillis
Crapo	McConnell	Toomey
Cruz	McSally	Wicker
Daines	Moran	Young
Enzi	Paul	

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Harris	Rosen
Bennet	Hassan	Schatz
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Schumer
Booker	Hirono	Shaheen
Brown	Jones	Sinema
Cantwell	Kaine	Smith
Cardin	King	Stabenow
Carper	Klobuchar	Tester
Casey	Leahy	Udall
Cooms	Markey	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Murphy	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Peters	Wyden
Gillibrand	Reed	

NOT VOTING—6

Graham	Murkowski	Perdue
Manchin	Murray	Sanders

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 44.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO DICK WILLIAMS

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I will be very brief for the Senator from Delaware so I am not taking up too much time.

I am here to do something very special. One of the great things we get to do is to pay tribute to people who do great things in our State. We don't brag about journalists as much as we should. They think we are saying bad things about them, but they are great. They make the country better. The fact that we have an accountable media makes us all great. There are superstars within the media who deserve acknowledgment, particularly when they retire from the job. In Georgia, that has been the case.

Dick Williams, in Atlanta, GA, announced on Sunday that after 53 years

in print, television, and radio journalism, he is going to retire. Dick has covered me over many years. He has been known as a conservative columnist, but he has gone after me as many times as he has been for me. He plays it straight down the middle unless it has to do with basketball—and he loves basketball. He has been chosen to referee in the conference championship for the State's high schools and has been a great sportsman for Georgetown University, for which he recruits athletes. He himself went to Georgetown.

Rebecca, his wife, was in the Georgia House as a reporter when I was in the Georgia House years ago. She is a talented house person who went on to ABC. She and Dick got married, and they have two children. They live in Brookhaven, GA, which is a new city that was created by the Georgia Legislature to allow independence for a lot of our cities that had been trapped inside the metro area.

His wife has been a reporter of journalism, and Dick has been a reporter of journalism. Then Dick bought the Dunwoody Crier. The Dunwoody Crier is one of those weekly publications—neighborhood newspapers—that everybody loves because it has their kids' pictures in it, because you can get a story about your wedding in there, and because Dick also writes in there some poignant columns that one would never read anywhere else.

When he wrote for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, he wrote for a newspaper that was owned by Eugene Patterson, by Ralph McGill, and by many talented writers. He was in the same category of spokesman and writer as those two gentlemen, who were giants, with McGill's having won a Pulitzer Prize.

Dick is one of the most favorite people I have ever known who reported on politics because he was always doing it for the right reasons. There are projects that have happened in our State today because Dick Williams took the power of the press not to trash something but to build up the facts that allowed it to pass. A lot of times, that doesn't happen, but when Dick saw a good deal, he would go for it, and when he saw a bad deal, he would go for it. Either way, you could take his word for it all the time because he was what is known in the profession as a straight shooter.

Dick Williams is a very special individual to me and my family. He did 1,700 shows called "The Georgia Gang." Every Sunday, at 8:30 in the morning, for 30 minutes, every politician in Georgia watches channel 5 in Atlanta because that is "The Georgia Gang." If you make it by that, your week is going to be pretty good because they haven't skewered you for something stupid that you did, but if you don't make it by that, you are going to have a tough week.

Dick Williams is the kind of journalist all of us love—accurate, articulate, smart, and caring about what he

does and the effect it may have. It is a real pleasure for me to stand on the floor of the U.S. Senate and say, Dick, thank you for the 1,700 great 30-minute shows you have done in your past. Thank you for all of the straight calls you made on the basketball court. Thank you for marrying Rebecca, who is a wonderful woman. Thank you for welcoming Lori Geary as your replacement every Sunday morning at 8:30. I now know, when I get up on Sundays, I will be going to church not with Dick Williams but with Lori Geary.

God bless you, Dick. Thanks for your contribution to Georgia.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

NOMINATION OF PAUL B. MATEY

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today having just voted no on the motion invoking cloture on Paul Matey's nomination to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

Now, I know speeches on procedure rarely make headlines, but I cannot be silent as the majority shreds long-held norms for political gain. Once again, the Republican majority has ignored the blue-slip process that allows Senators to either green light or prevent hearings on judicial nominees from their home States.

Some Americans may wonder, why does this matter? Well, the blue-slip process gives the people a voice through their elected representatives on who ultimately renders justice in their State. Neither Senator BOOKER nor I have returned blue slips for Mr. Matey. In fact, Mr. Matey's confirmation hearing took place before Senator BOOKER—our State's voice on the Judiciary Committee—was even extended the common courtesy of meeting with Mr. Matey. It wasn't for lack of trying. Senator BOOKER requested time with Mr. Matey, but when he didn't receive it, the Judiciary Committee proceeded anyway.

To add insult to injury, committee Republicans falsely claimed the White House had meaningfully consulted with myself and Senator BOOKER, the home State Senators, and that is simply not the case. There never was meaningful consultation between the White House and Senator BOOKER or me to identify a highly qualified consensus nominee—rather, we were informed about the decision to nominate Mr. Matey—nor did I receive any offer to meet with Mr. Matey, not before his nomination, not after his nomination, not even to date as we are voting on the Senate floor.

Look, I have come to expect this behavior from the Trump White House, but in the Senate, Democrats always—always—respected the blue-slip process during our time in the majority. That is undeniable.

Before President Trump took office, only five judges in the past century were confirmed with only one blue slip, much less no blue slips. Never has a Democratic-led Senate ever held a hearing or confirmed a judicial nomi-

nee without a blue slip from a Republican Senator. It is shameful.

As long as the President keeps packing our courts with corporate-friendly Federalist Society judges, the Republican majority is willing to destroy a process that Senator Orrin Hatch—former chairman of the Judiciary Committee—once called “the last remaining check on the President's judicial appointment power.”

President Trump's nominees are now being confirmed at record speed, despite objections from home State Senators.

My Republican friends claim to be the party of conservatism. Yet there is nothing conservative about sweeping aside century-old norms for political gain. They have put their party before country and show no fidelity to the institutions that have made this country great.

Aside from the degradation of Senate norms surrounding Mr. Matey's nomination, I have real concerns with his record. The people of New Jersey have no appetite for a judge who served in Gov. Chris Christie's administration and was once even called a protege of our esteemed former Governor.

As deputy chief counsel for Governor Christie, Mr. Matey said he tried to ensure that that administration followed “the highest standards of propriety, ethics, and legality.”

Somehow I question that. Consider what the people of New Jersey had to go through during Governor Christie's tenure: the Bridgegate scandal, the defunding of a Rutgers institute that was run by a Federal nominee, the spiteful removal of a security detail from former Governor Codey, and the rampant mismanagement of Superstorm Sandy relief contracts, which forced too many families to live in trailers for years on end. That is quite a list—quite a list.

I struggle to believe that Mr. Matey, the second most senior attorney in the Christie administration, had no knowledge of this behavior.

During his confirmation hearing, Mr. Matey could not detail any of the steps he took to ensure ethics rules were followed and declined to offer any description of his supposed “rigorous system” of monitoring and oversight at his confirmation hearing.

Apparently, Mr. Matey's system wasn't so rigorous, considering that Bridgegate—for those of my colleagues who may not know, although I think everybody knows, is when the operatives of the Christie administration closed access to the George Washington Bridge from the New Jersey side, which caused massive—massive—tieups on the New Jersey side, all to politically punish the mayor of the community where the George Washington Bridge leads from on the New Jersey side.

Bridgegate amounted to one of the most egregious abuses of political power against everyday New Jersey families in our history. He was sup-

posedly the guy who was making sure there was a rigorous system of monitoring and oversight. Well, I don't know how that happened.

I also have concerns about Mr. Matey's career after working for Governor Christie.

During his time as the senior vice president of University Hospital in Newark, a nationwide investigation gave the hospital an F—F, failure—for patient safety standards. Mr. Matey has acknowledged that while these issues were medical in nature, he did have some personal responsibility to mitigate risks to patients.

Likewise, some of Mr. Matey's writings suggest a hostility toward plaintiff attorneys who help everyday Americans take on powerful corporate interests in class action lawsuits.

In 2005, he authored an article with now-Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch that lamented how the Supreme Court's ruling in *Dura Pharmaceuticals* was a missed opportunity to “curb frivolous fraud claims” and dismissed plaintiff attorneys as seeking “free rides to fast riches.” In other words, Paul Matey saw a very narrow question in the *Dura Pharmaceuticals* case as an opening for the Court to make a sweeping ruling on all securities class actions. Now, that is what you call an activist judge.

Matey then goes on to decry the “enormous toll on the economy” securities fraud litigation takes on corporations but with little concern for the actual victims of security fraud.

Most troubling to me is how Mr. Matey has done zero—I repeat, zero—pro bono work throughout his legal career. His Senate Judiciary questionnaire lacks any record of pro bono representation. When he was asked about it, Mr. Matey claimed his work on behalf of the State of New Jersey satisfied the requirement. I couldn't disagree more. That is not pro bono work. You were paid for it.

Canon 2 of the American Bar Association's Code of Professional Responsibility explicitly emphasizes the importance of pro bono work. For many corporate lawyers, representing the underserved is the only way to witness firsthand how the scales of justice in this country are too often tipped in favor of the wealthy and well connected. Pro bono work helps lawyers cultivate sound judgment and is especially important to those seeking to become Federal judges.

Mr. Matey has done nothing to serve the disadvantaged, and that does not bode well for the fair administration of justice, nor does the Republican majority's disregard for procedures like blue slips bode well for the Senate's constitutional role to provide advice and consent or our responsibility to help build a judiciary that is responsive to the needs of the American people in the courtroom.

For all of these reasons, I urge my colleagues to oppose confirmation of Paul Matey to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. We are better than this.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Delaware.

CENTRAL AMERICA

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, last month, just hours after Congress passed bipartisan legislation to fully fund our Federal Government, I was privileged to join with Senator JEFF MERKLEY of Oregon and four Members of the House of Representatives, including our at-large Congresswoman from Delaware, LISA BLUNT ROCH-ESTER, to lead a congressional delegation to Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador—three countries that are oftentimes collectively referred to as the Northern Triangle.

Our delegation was on a factfinding mission. We wanted to drill down on the root causes of illegal immigration from Central America and assess the effectiveness of a new approach in recent years to help improve conditions on the ground in those three countries.

On our flight to Guatemala, several of us watched as President Trump—in order to build his long-promised wall—declared a national emergency, even though while illegal immigration spiked in the last couple of months across our southern border, if you go back to 2001 through the end of 2018, it has actually dropped by, believe it or not, 80 percent.

As former chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, I understand the need for secure borders, and I have supported efforts to enhance border security over the last two decades that I have served in this body.

I have been down to Central America any number of times with people like Gen. John Kelly, when he was the SOUTHCOM commander, with Jeh Johnson, with RON JOHNSON, both of whom served as chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, and John McCain. We went into that part of the world and along our border with Mexico to better understand what our needs are for border security.

Since 2003, the United States has spent, believe it or not, \$263 billion—that is almost one-quarter of a trillion dollars—on border security.

We have doubled the number of border agents. We have deployed hundreds of miles of barriers and roads in places where they are most effective. We have funded highly sophisticated surveillance aircraft, equipment on drones and airplanes, helicopters, mile-high dirigibles, along with motion detectors, high-speed boats, tunnel detectors, and a lot more.

The approach on border security at our border with Mexico needs to be multilayered, and it is. There are some places barriers do make sense—a lot of places, in fact. There are some places that actually walls—the kind President Trump has envisioned, think San Diego and maybe Juarez—make sense, but there are a lot of other places where different kinds of barriers make sense.

In some places, roads alongside of barriers make sense.

We have deployed aircraft. We have deployed fixed-wing aircraft. We have deployed helicopters. We have deployed drones. If you just put them out there by themselves, they are not going to do much good, but if you put highly sophisticated equipment on each of those platforms, they give us the ability to see from our border into Mexico as far as 20, 25 miles in all kinds of weather—people as small as children who are approaching our border—and then we know where to deploy our Border Patrol to meet them and intercept them.

We can put the same kind of sophisticated surveillance equipment on dirigibles that go up 5,000 feet, 10,000 feet into the air. We can put them on towers that are mobile, towers that are stationary along the border as well.

We can put people on horseback. We can put, believe it or not, some of our Border Patrol officers on horseback. The reason we do that is, in areas with high vegetation, the Border Patrol officer on a horse—a big horse—can see over the vegetation and pick up people trying to come across the border illegally.

In some places, boats make sense, high-speed boats. In other places, boat ramps make sense. If you don't have boat ramps, you can't put the boat in, and you don't have much mobility.

Those are some of the things we have done in terms of providing better border security.

The encouraging news is, a lot of it has worked. A lot of it has worked, but we could build a wall from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean, and if that is all we do, people are still going to come to this country—not so much from Mexico. People used to come in huge numbers from Mexico.

If you look back in the history of the last especially 15 years, most of the folks who were coming here illegally were coming from Mexico across our borders. Today, it is quite different. There are more Mexicans going back into Mexico than there are Mexicans coming into the United States. Most of the illegal immigration is not coming from Mexico. It is coming from Guatemala. It is coming from Honduras. It is coming from El Salvador.

The trek from the Northern Triangle—these countries right here—up through Mexico to our border is over 1,000 miles, probably closer to 1,500 miles, depending on how you want to get there.

The spike in immigration we have seen in the last several months is mostly from Guatemala's mountainous highlands. They have a lot of indigenous people, and they don't have a very good lifestyle. They have a lot of malnourishment, a lot of stunted growth, and not a lot in terms of encouragement and economic opportunity. Let me tell you a quick story of the reason why these people are trying to get out of there.

In the southern part of our State, Sussex County is our biggest county.

We raise enormous numbers of chickens there. For every person that live in Delaware, there are 300 chickens. I know the Presiding Officer has a lot of chickens in his State, too. We have a lot of folks who come up, including from Guatemala, and work in poultry processing plants. They are good workers. They work hard.

We have a nonprofit in southern Delaware, in Georgetown, DE, called La Esperanza, which means "hope." They work with indigenous populations, illegal and legal migrants, who have come to southern Delaware. A couple years ago, I was visiting La Esperanza, and they told me the story about a young boy and his younger sister who fled Guatemala. They came to the United States and, ultimately, to Delaware.

This is why they came. The 15-year-old boy in Guatemala was approached by gangs in his community. They said: We want you to join our gang.

He said: Let me talk to my parents first before I do that.

He knew his parents wouldn't be too excited with that. He talked to his parents, who said: You are not going to join a gang. We don't want you to do that. Just tell them no.

He avoided the gang members for a while, but they finally caught him and said: Are you going to join our gang?

He said: I talked to my parents, and they don't want me to do that, so not now. I am not going to do it now.

They said: We have a message for you and your parents. If you don't join our gang, somebody in your family is going to die.

He went home and told his parents, and their message to him was: Join the gang. Just don't do anything stupid.

So he joined the gang. They have to go through an initiation ritual, and as part of that ritual, he was called on to rape his 13-year-old sister. He reported what was expected of him to his parents, and within a week he and his sister were on their way out of that country.

The gangs in these countries, especially in Guatemala, are entrepreneurial. They may be involved in trafficking people. They may be involved in trafficking drugs. They are really good at extortion—extorting money from small businesses and going to a business and saying: I want you to pay me protection money. If you provide protection money, I will see that you are not harmed.

The merchant says: Who are you protecting me from?

You are actually being protected from the guy who is trying to extort money from you, and if you don't pay the money, they will kill you. It is just like that. As for the rate of extortion in these three countries from gangs who do multiple kinds of crimes, that is one of their favorites.

The reason why people live lives of misery has a lot to do with us—because we are addicted to drugs. The drugs are trafficked through these three countries, and we are complicit in their misery.

A Catholic priest testified before the Homeland Security Committee a couple of years ago. He described a situation where our drug addiction makes life miserable in these three countries. Then, when they try to get out, we make it difficult to impossible to get into our country.

The priest who was our witness that day said: It is a little bit like the fire department visiting a house down here. The fire department goes into the house. There is no fire. The fire department goes into the house, and they start a fire. When the people try to run out of the house, the fire department leaves the house, locks the door, and drives away.

That is really a pretty good example of what we have done in Central America. We have lit the fire. We have left the family in the house. We have locked the door and driven away. I think that is morally wrong, and we can do better than that.

As it turns out, aside from spending \$263 billion along the border for security in the last 18 years or so, someone has come up with a better idea. It is not a new idea. It is an idea based on something called Plan Colombia. Plan Colombia was developed 20 years ago, when in Bogota, the capital of Colombia, you had the FARC, the leftist guerrillas trying to take down the government, and drug lords and drug gangs trying to take down the government of Colombia. One day, a bunch of gunmen rounded up the supreme court justices of Colombia, took them into a room, and shot them to death.

Colombia was teetering, and there were questions: Are they going to be able to make it? Some very brave Colombian leaders stood up and said: We are not going to let this happen. We are not going to let these guys take down our country. Our President then, Bill Clinton, and a fellow who was chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Joe Biden, found common cause with the leaders of Colombia. Basically, the Colombians developed a plan that would help to stabilize their government and enable them to restore order, rule of law, and economic prosperity, and we helped them. I will give one example of what we did.

The Presiding Officer spent a lot of time in the military. One of the things we did is that we provided helicopters so that the military of Colombia and the police of Colombia had mobility. They could go over the mountainous rivers and country and track down the bad guys. That is what they did with our help.

We helped them to figure out how to collect revenues. They didn't collect many revenues, and the wealthy people of that country didn't pay much taxes at all. We taught them how to do a better job in revenues and to use that to help to develop their government institutions. The people in Colombia did the heavy lifting. We helped. It is like they say in Home Depot: You can do it; we can help.

The Presiding Officer has heard me say many times in the Environment and Public Works Committee: Find out what works, and do more of that.

Plan Colombia worked. It took a long time. I am an old Navy guy. It reminds me of trying to change the course of an aircraft carrier. You stick with it, and you can make sure to change the course of an aircraft carrier. It doesn't happen fast. Plan Colombia has taken years to work, but it has worked.

About 3 or 4 years ago, when we were starting to see a real surge—again, not from Mexican immigration illegally into our country but from these three countries—President Obama called on Joe Biden to take off-the-shelf Plan Colombia, and see if it might be possible to develop a Central American version of Plan Colombia. The idea would be to focus on three or four areas. We would provide some of the money, but these countries would provide a lot more because it is their country. It is not our country, but we are complicit in their misery. So we have an obligation to help them—a moral obligation.

These are the three areas of focus of the Alliance for Prosperity—the modern-day, Central American version of Plan Colombia. One is economic hope and economic opportunity. That is one. That is one of the major drivers of people getting out of there—lack of economic opportunity. Two is violence and the lack of rule of law. Three is just corruption. Corruption is endemic in their Federal government—the national government—in State and local governments, and in business. It is just endemic. Those are the three buckets that the Alliance for Prosperity was designed to address. We put up some of the money. The other countries put up a good deal more.

One example is El Salvador. For every dollar we put up, they put up \$7. We used that money in El Salvador to, among other things, target the cities with the most crime. We used some of our resources but a lot more of their resources. The crime in those 50 cities is down dramatically in the last couple of years.

In Honduras the murder rate is down by about 35 percent. These three countries vie for murder capital of the world and have for some time. The murder rate in Honduras is down by 35 percent or 40 percent. The murder rates in Guatemala and El Salvador over the last 3 years are down by half. Would we still feel comfortable in those neighborhoods? Probably not, but it is better than what it was.

In Honduras, one of the things they did is basically that they fired one-third of their police officers and replaced them with vetted units. With that in mind, they did a much better job on extortion. They did a much better job on kidnapping and actually bringing to trial and sentencing the folks who are committing the crimes.

USAID is working down there in San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador,

and in the capital of Guatemala, creating almost like tech centers where young entrepreneurs can start their own businesses. They get some help from us and some coaching from us, and they are starting to lead an economic recovery.

These are beautiful countries—lush and with beautiful beaches in some places. So they are attractive for tourism. They have, for the most part, very fertile soil, and with the right kind of help, coaching, and mentoring, they can do a much better job feeding themselves and exporting a lot of what they raise.

Things are starting to happen. Again, it is like that aircraft carrier I talked about. It is slow at first and, then, more perceptible as time goes by.

In San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador, we used Federal—American—money in order to leverage the Howard G. Buffett Foundation to go—literally, in the middle of the city—into 17 acres of what used to be a beautiful park and was later riddled with crime, and to clean it up and make it beautiful again for the people of that city.

One multinational company has come down into one of these countries and put millions of dollars into creating a DNA facility to help in solving crimes.

Little by little, things are getting better. There are still problems in Guatemala and among the highlands indigenous people who are still trying to get out of there. Ninety percent of the immigration right now is out of that part of Guatemala.

The last thing I will say is this. They just had an election in El Salvador 4 weeks ago. The current President is a 75-year-old guerilla leader who was a close friend of Venezuela's leader and was at Maduro's inauguration a month or so ago. He is friendly with the Chinese and friendly with the Cubans. He is leaving. He is stepping down as the President of that country in a couple of months.

Who is going to succeed him? It is the 38-year-old mayor of San Salvador, who gets economic development. He is free of corruption. He is someone who has a good relationship with our embassy there, and he is highly regarded by our folks. He is an honest guy, full of energy. In his campaign, he was the first candidate for President in the history of the country who has gotten over 50 percent. It didn't have to go to a runoff. It is an amazing development. He harnessed social media to get elected.

Meanwhile, there is going to be a Presidential election in Guatemala in June. Jimmy Morales is the President there. He is somebody whom Vice President Biden and I tried to mentor. Initially, it started out very promising. Then, more recently, there are real concerns about corruption involving his family. His time as President will expire about the middle of this year, but in Guatemala the three frontrunners to run for president are

all women. The person who is believed to be the frontrunner of them all is a woman named Thelma Aldana, who is the immediate past Attorney General. She is tough on crime and tough on corruption. She has been in this country some this month and had the opportunity to talk with Vice President Biden to get some encouragement from him.

Joe Biden is beloved in Delaware and in some other places around the country, but they really love him there because he has been interested in root causes—not just in treating the symptoms of the problems and challenges on the border but actually helping to address the root causes.

The fellow who has just been elected President of El Salvador is a 38-year-old millennial. His social media people have now started to help the former Attorney General who is running for President of Guatemala.

As the Presiding Officer and my colleagues know, the most important ingredient in the success of any organization I have ever seen is leadership. It is leadership.

We are seeing a changing of the guard not only in terms of age but also in terms of just where they come from, on a scale of 1 to 100.

The last thing I want to mention—if I could find my spot here in my notes—is that none of this is easy, but it basically says that we have a moral obligation to the folks down here. We make their lives miserable because of our drug addiction, and we ought to help them. They have to do most of the work, but we have to help them. We can't just help them for a couple of weeks or a couple of months or a couple of years, as we found out in Colombia; we have to stick with this a good deal longer to help change the culture of these countries.

I am encouraged to say that change is happening, and we should keep it going. There is a sense of optimism that is beginning to emerge in these countries. I think there are some reasons to be encouraged that a plan modeled after Plan Colombia and tailored especially for this part of the world can actually succeed. If we don't give up and especially if they don't give up, it very well will.

P.S. The cost of actually capturing somebody on our border who is starting to come in illegally, detaining them, putting them in a holding camp or a detention center, feeding them, providing healthcare, and eventually deporting them and sending them back down to wherever they came from, I am told is \$27,000 a person—\$27,000 a person.

These people love their countries, and given a chance, they would much rather stay down there. They would much rather stay down there. They might like to come up to visit and maybe do some work sometime and go back home. But they want to have a decent life. Frankly, if we will help them realize that, they will stay down

there. They may come up as tourists, and maybe we can go down there as tourists. We heard that over and over.

The last thing we heard down there is that they love America. They love America. They are mindful of what we are trying to do to help them. They are grateful for the help we are providing. I know a bunch of them. I met a lot of them down there. Some of them live in my State. For the most part, they are good and decent people. They deserve our help. I am proud of the support this Congress has provided for the last 4 years for their lives and prosperity. My hope is that we will continue to do that and continue to use that money to leverage a lot of good work not only for those countries but for nonprofits, NGOs, foundations, and private companies, and that together we will get the job done. I am encouraged.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I really want to say to my friend, Senator JEFF MERKLEY, who went down to this part of the world any number of times as a young man and went back again last month still as a young man, that he has provided a lot of great insight. It has been a joy going with him and now working with him on this as we go forward.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULIVAN). The Senator from Arkansas.

THE AMERICAN LEGION'S CENTENNIAL

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, the American Legion, the Nation's largest wartime veterans service organization, is celebrating its centennial this year. I rise today to recognize this milestone.

For the past 100 years, the American Legion has been a leading advocate for veterans and their families. The Legion has played a role in crafting legislation, shaping policies, expanding services, and creating generations of civic-minded Americans.

Founded in Paris following World War I, the American Legion was officially chartered by Congress on September 16, 1919. Since its founding, Legionnaires have proudly worked to strengthen our country and our communities, while upholding the promise our country made to those who have worn our Nation's uniform.

The list of achievements that the Legion has helped fight for is long and includes the creation of the U.S. Veterans' Bureau in 1924, the forerunner of the Veterans' Administration. Decades later, the Legion was active in elevating to Cabinet-level status the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Following the American Legion's lead, Congress adopted a flag code to formally lay out the protocol for carrying and displaying our Nation's banner. The Legion continues to actively support the constitutional amendment to protect the American flag from desecration.

During World War II, the American Legion drafted legislation that would become the GI bill. Legionnaires were

instrumental in securing passage of this landmark legislation that helped returning troops further their education, buy houses, and start businesses. It also established hiring privileges for veterans.

The Legion continues its strong advocacy for improving these and other benefits. Its efforts were vital in the passage of the Post-9/11 GI bill and the enhancement measure passed in 2017, which bears the name of a former American Legion commander, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act.

After a century of service, Legionnaires remain just as committed to advocating on behalf of our veterans today.

Last month, I met with members of the American Legion Department of Arkansas who were visiting the Nation's Capital to voice their support for the organization's 2019 priorities. This includes supporting the VA's efforts to reduce veteran suicides, improving healthcare for women veterans, fighting veteran homelessness, ensuring GI bill benefits, and ensuring benefits to veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange. I am optimistic about the progress we will make on these important issues because of the excellent and active work of the American Legion Department of Arkansas, which has more than 10,000 members in nearly 150 posts throughout the State.

The Arkansas Department of the American Legion was incorporated on May 12, 1919. National headquarters records show it was the first incorporation of the organization in the United States. There is a proud history of involvement in all corners of the State, ranging from the annual fallen heroes ceremony to the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year program.

I have had the privilege of participating in Legion events around the State, including honoring the Arkansans who paid the ultimate sacrifice, celebrating the milestones of the posts, and recognizing young Arkansans who have been distinguished by Legionnaires. The Legion rightfully prides itself as being actively involved in the community and teaching Arkansas youth how to be good citizens. Through a variety of programs and activities—Boys and Girls State Programs, support of the Boy Scouts of America, and the American Legion Baseball Program, to name a few—it encourages fostering a dedication to civic responsibility, promoting American values, and serving others.

For 100 years, the American Legion has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of veterans and their families. In honor of their centennial, Congress approved minting a coin to recognize its milestone. I was a proud cosponsor of the bill and support its passage to commemorate the legacy of the American Legion and the thousands of men and women who have supported its mission and upheld the four pillars of its founding: veterans affairs and rehabilitation,

national security, Americanism, and children and youth.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I have seen up close Legionnaires' and the American Legion Auxiliary's dedication and the results their efforts have produced in Arkansas and across our entire country. I am proud to recognize the American Legion on its 100 years of advocacy and celebrate this century of service with the 2 million members who are making a difference each day as Legionnaires.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all postcloture time on the Matey nomination expire at 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 12; further, that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, on International Women's Day, we reflect on the enormous contributions women make worldwide to their communities and their countries across every aspect of society including justice, politics, culture, peacebuilding, the economy, and national security. On this day, we also recognize and recommit to fighting on behalf of the many women whose voices governments seek to silence. Around the world, women take enormous risks to advance the rights of their fellow citizens and to promote the principles of freedom of expression, religion, and assembly. They fight for rights to access education and healthcare, and they fight discrimination, corruption, and violence. For their words and for their actions, all too often, governments turn these women into political prisoners.

Today, I want to highlight just a tiny fraction of the countless number of women and girls held behind bars unjustly. Similarly, unfortunately, the repressive governments detaining these women are just a small fraction of the governments around the world that lock up women for exercising their fundamental freedoms.

Just last week, the government of Saudi Arabia announced that it would

put on trial its country's leading women's rights activists who have been in prison without charges since May 2018. The crackdown on these activists began just weeks ahead of the much-anticipated lifting of the ban on women driving, one of the very causes for which many of the detained activists had campaigned. While some were quickly released, others remain imprisoned. They include Loujain al-Hathloul, Aziza al-Yousef, Eman al-Nafjan, Nouf Abdelaziz, Mayaa al-Zahrani, Samar Badawi, Nassima al-Saada, Hatoon al-Fassi, Shadan al-Onezi, and Amal al-Harbi. Credible reports indicate that Saudi interrogators tortured at least four of the women, including with electric shocks and whippings and sexual harassment and assault.

In the Philippines, Senator Leila de Lima, a brave champion of human rights, launched an investigation into extrajudicial executions that began shortly after President Duterte took office in 2016. As one of the only leaders bold enough to oppose President Duterte's "war on drugs," she has faced prolonged arbitrary detention, according to Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. President Duterte has sought to silence her courageous voice as she spoke out against widespread human rights violations, including thousands of extrajudicial executions of mostly poor and marginalized people.

In Egypt, Hanan Badr el-Din, a human rights defender and cofounder of the Families of the Forcibly Disappeared Association, was detained on May 6, 2017, at Qanatar prison while visiting an individual who had been forcibly disappeared. She started her activism following the forced disappearance of her husband in 2013. She suffers from a serious genetic disorder, and her health is rapidly deteriorating.

China is responsible for some of the most grave human rights abuses, including of women. China has imprisoned hundreds of thousands of Uighur women in detention camps across its northwest region. These women are forced to renounce their Muslim religion and Uighur language and memorize Chinese propaganda. Forced labor, torture, and death are common. Thousands of children have been separated from their mothers and fathers and placed in a separate network of orphanages. One husband of a Uighur woman told Human Rights Watch: "My wife was about to go back overseas but they took her passport. And when she went to ask to get her passport back, they told her she needs to be subjected to political education for 10 days, and then they would let her go. That was on July 20, 2017. Since then, she's been in a political education camp." The family of Guligeina Tashimaimaiti, a Uighur PhD student who was last seen in December 2017 when she returned from studying in Malaysia, for example, fears she is in detention and at risk of torture and other ill treatment.

China has also targeted Tibetan Buddhist nuns. The government expelled hundreds of nuns in 2017 from Larung Gar in Sichuan, the world's largest Tibetan Buddhist center. Their homes were demolished; they were barred from entering other monasteries, and faced detention, harassment, and abuse.

In Eritrea, Aster Fissehatsion has been held incommunicado without charge or trial since September 2001. Her whereabouts, 17 years later, are still not known. Aster Fissehatsion was arrested together with 10 other members of a group of political dissidents known as the Group of 15, or G-15, including her former husband, former Vice President and foreign minister of Eritrea, Mahmoud Ahmed Sheriffo.

Perhaps, most tragically, this is just a snapshot of some of the brave women who dare to speak up for fundamental rights and values.

So on this International Women's Day, as we reflect on the achievements of women and reflect on the work that remains to be done, I call on all of us to redouble our efforts to free women political prisoners. Governments have the responsibility to promote the safety, well-being, and fundamental rights of their citizens. I call on governments who are unjustly detaining, harassing, and torturing women for exercising their fundamental rights to immediately release these politically motivated detentions. As they continue to struggle, let us all take up the mantle of their cause.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING MIAMI TOUR COMPANY

• Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, as chairman of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize a small business that exemplifies the unique American entrepreneurial spirit. Today, it is my distinct pleasure to name Miami Tour Company as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Founded in 2002, Miami Tour Company has quickly become a premier provider of tours and activities in south Florida. Husband and wife, Gus and Michelle Moore, founded the company based on the principle of providing the best customer experience possible. Gus and Michelle met while working at a restaurant and bonded over a shared passion for making sure that visitors to their home State have a great experience. After serving thousands of hungry patrons and learning how to make visitors to Miami as happy as possible, Gus and Michelle decided to start a business. With their combined knowledge of the area and a knack for anticipating their customer's needs, a tour company was the perfect fit. With their savings from working at the restaurant, the couple

bought a tour bus, and the Miami Tour Company was born.

Seventeen years later, Miami Tour Company has grown to transport 35,000 passengers annually and have served more than 600,000 clientele. Their fleet now includes motorcoaches, minibuses, vans, SUVs, shuttle buses, and boat tours. The company's local guides run day tours through Key West, Orlando, the Everglades, and Miami Beach. They have also instituted a GPS-guided system in their tour buses that triggers high-quality digital voice recordings at locations of interest, making them the only tour company in Florida to offer this technology. To expand their customer base, the company has begun offering the recordings in Spanish, Portuguese, Mandarin, French, Italian, German, and Russian, allowing visitors from around the world to enjoy the attractions that Florida has to offer.

On top of providing enjoyable and informative tours, Miami Tour Company gives back to their community. They guide local elementary students on free historical bus tours throughout Miami and offer students free eco-tourism trips to the Everglades. They also give back to their community by providing complimentary travel charters for activities for the children and families of Sophia's Hope. In addition, they donate portions of their proceeds to the Miami Beach Holocaust Memorial and the Miami Beach Botanical Gardens. Miami Tour Company has been a true small business success story. Their dedication to hospitality has been recognized with an A-plus rating from the Better Business Bureau and a Certificate of Excellence from online reviewers.

Gus and Michelle's commitment to an exceptional customer experience represents the standard of hospitality with which Florida small businesses are known for. Companies like Miami Tour Company are one of the many reasons that visitors enjoy south Florida and keep coming back. I would like to congratulate Gus, Michelle, and all of the employees at Miami Tour Company for being named the Senate Small Business of the Week. I wish them good luck and look forward to watching their continued growth and success.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

BUDGET OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020—PM 5

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred jointly, pursuant to the order of January 30, 1975, as modified by the order of April 11, 1986; to the Committees on the Budget; and Appropriations:

To the Congress of the United States:

In just over 2 years, together with the American people, we have launched an unprecedented economic boom. Since I was elected, we have created more than 5 million new jobs, including half a million manufacturing jobs. Nearly 5 million Americans have been lifted off food stamps. Unemployment is the lowest in nearly half a century. African American unemployment, Hispanic American unemployment, and Asian American unemployment rates have all reached historic lows. Our Nation is experiencing an economic miracle—and it is improving the lives of all our citizens.

We have achieved these extraordinary gains thanks to historic tax cuts and an unprecedented regulatory reduction campaign, through unleashing American energy production, systematically fixing bad trade deals, and remaining absolutely committed to putting the needs of the American worker first.

My Administration worked with the Congress to pass unprecedented legislation to confront the opioid crisis, a sweeping new farm bill, groundbreaking criminal justice reform, major investments to rebuild the military, and historic Department of Veterans Affairs reforms to ensure that our great veterans have access to high quality healthcare.

We are also making our communities safer. To target violent crime, my Administration has increased support for Federal, State, and local law enforcement. We have added nearly 200 new violent crime prosecutors across the United States. And last year, the Department of Justice prosecuted more violent crimes than ever before. As a result, violent crime is falling.

My Administration is confronting the national security and humanitarian crisis on our southern border, and we are accepting the moral duty to create an immigration system that protects the lives and jobs of our citizens. This includes our obligation to the millions of immigrants living in the United States today who followed the rules and respected our laws.

In the 20th century, America saved freedom, transformed science, and defined the middle class standard of living. Now we must write the next chapter of the great American adventure, turbo-charging the industries of the fu-

ture and establishing a new standard of living for the 21st century. An amazing quality of life for all of our citizens is within reach. We can make our communities safer, our families stronger, our culture richer, our faith deeper, and our middle class bigger and more prosperous than ever before.

We are now addressing our challenges from a position of strength. My 2020 Budget builds on the tremendous progress we have made and provides a clear roadmap for the Congress to bring Federal spending and debt under control. We must protect future generations from Washington's habitual deficit spending.

This year, I asked most executive departments and agencies to cut their budgets by at least 5 percent. In addition to reflecting those reductions, my Budget invests in the following priorities:

Securing our Borders and Protecting our Sovereignty. As President, my highest duty is the defense of our Nation—which is why finishing the border wall is an urgent national priority. All who are privileged to hold elected office must work together to create an immigration system that promotes wage growth and economic opportunity, while preventing drugs, terrorism, and crime from entering the United States. Immigration policy, like all policy, must serve the interests of Americans living here today—including the millions of new Americans who came here legally to join our national family. The American people are entitled to a strong border that stops illegal immigration, and a responsible visa policy that protects our security and our workforce. My Budget continues to reflect these priorities, and I look forward to working with the Congress to finish the border wall and build a safe, just, and lawful immigration system that will benefit generations of Americans to come.

Preserving Peace through Strength. A strong military, fully integrated with our allies and all our instruments of power, enables our Nation to deter war, preserve peace, and, if necessary, defeat aggression against United States interests. To that end, my Budget requests \$750 billion for national defense, an increase of \$34 billion, or 5 percent, from the 2019 enacted level. The Budget funds the National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy, building on the major gains we have already made throughout the world.

Protecting our Veterans. Our Nation's brave warriors and defenders deserve the best care America has to offer—both during and after their active service. Last year, I signed into law the historic VA MISSION Act of 2018 to reform and transform the Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare system into an integrated system for the 21st century. My Budget fully funds all requirements for veterans' healthcare services and provides additional funding to implement the VA MISSION Act of 2018.

Investing in America's Students and Workers. To help protect taxpayer dollars, my Budget continues my request to create an educational finance system that requires postsecondary institutions that accept taxpayer funds to have skin in the game through a student loan risk-sharing program. My Administration will also continue to seek expanded Pell Grant eligibility for high-quality, short-term programs in high-demand fields, so that students and workers can quickly gain valuable skills at a more affordable cost and obtain family-sustaining jobs. We must create and invest in better opportunities for our Nation's students and job seekers, while ensuring that we do so in a more efficient and effective manner.

Research for Childhood Cancers. Many childhood cancers have not seen new therapies in decades. My Budget initiates a new effort that invests \$500 million over the next 10 years to support this critical life-saving research.

Defeating HIV/AIDS in America. The HIV epidemic still plagues our Nation, with more than 38,000 Americans infected every year. In response, my Budget provides \$291 million to the Department of Health and Human Services to defeat the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The goal is to eliminate most new infections within 5 years (75 percent) and nearly all within 10 years (90 percent). This initiative will focus efforts on diagnosis, prevention, and treatment efforts in the locations where intense transmissions of the virus are driving the epidemic.

Confronting the Opioid Epidemic. My Budget continues historic levels of funding for our law enforcement, prevention, and treatment efforts to combat the opioid and drug addiction epidemic.

Supporting Working Families. America must also lead in supporting the families of our workforce so that they can balance the competing demands of work and family. My Budget includes a one-time, mandatory investment of \$1 billion for a competitive fund aimed at supporting under-served populations and stimulating employer investments in child care for working families. My Administration has also pledged to provide paid parental leave to help working parents, and we are committed to partnering with the Congress to enact this important policy.

We must always strive to uphold our oaths to promote and protect the personal and economic freedoms the Constitution guarantees to us all.

We must work together to renew the bonds of love and loyalty that link us to one another—as friends, as citizens, as neighbors, as patriots, and as Americans.

My Budget reflects my Administration's commitment to these worthy goals as it seeks to make the United States of America wealthier, stronger, safer, and greater for every American family and neighborhood.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, March 11, 2019.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 3:02 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 49. An act to designate the outstation of the Department of Veterans Affairs in North Ogden, Utah, as the Major Brent Taylor Vet Center Outstation.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 729. A bill to prohibit the use of funds to Federal agencies to establish a panel, task force, advisory committee, or other effort to challenge the scientific consensus on climate change, and for other purposes.

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, March 11, 2019, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 49. An act to designate the outstation of the Department of Veterans Affairs in North Ogden, Utah, as the Major Brent Taylor Vet Center Outstation.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-530. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Methoxyfenozide; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 9985-06-OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2019; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-531. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "S-Metolachlor; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 9983-79-OCSPP) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2019; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-532. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, a notice of additional time required to complete a report on the development of an Integrated Lodging Pilot Program (ILPP); to the Committees on Armed Services; Appropriations; and Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-533. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Availability of DoD Directives, DoD Instructions, DoD Publications, and Changes" (RIN0790-AK48) received in the

Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2019; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-534. A communication from the Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan (RSFPP)" (RIN0790-AK31) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2019; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-535. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the continuation of the national emergency originally declared in Executive Order 13660 on March 6, 2014, with respect to Ukraine; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-536. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, the continuation of the national emergency originally declared in executive order 13288 on March 6, 2003, with respect to the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-537. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Michigan; Infrastructure SIP Requirements for the 2012 PM2.5 NAAQS; Multistate Transport" (FRL No. 9990-41-Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-538. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Michigan; Revisions to Part 1 General Provisions Rules" (FRL No. 9990-42-Region 5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-539. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; South Carolina; Update to Materials Incorporated by Reference" (FRL No. 9990-38-Region 4) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-540. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Arizona; Nonattainment Plan for the Miami SO2 Nonattainment Area" (FRL No. 9990-40-Region 4) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-541. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval of State Plans for Designated Facilities and Pollutants; Kansas; Sewage Sludge Incineration Units" (FRL No. 9989-73-Region 7) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-542. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division,

Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan; National Priorities List: Partial Deletion of the Robintech, Inc./National Pipe Co. Superfund Site" (FRL No. 9990-15-Region 2) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-543. A communication from the Director of the Regulations and Disclosure Law Division, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Extension of Import Restrictions on Archaeological and Ecclesiastical Ethnological Materials from Honduras" (RIN1515-AE45) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2019; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-544. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(d) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles, including technical data and defense services, to Japan, to support the manufacture, integration, assembly, operation, training, testing, and maintenance of AN/ARC-164 (RT-1145 and RT-1504) UHF Receiver/Transmitters and related radio equipment (Transmittal No. DDTC 18-094); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-545. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) and (d) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the manufacture of significant military equipment and the export of defense articles, including technical data and defense services, abroad to Turkey to support the manufacture, sales, and maintenance training of all variants of Armored Combat Vehicle (ACV) Family of Vehicles, Sharp-shooter and 40/50 Turrets, the remotely fired .50 caliber Cupola, and modernization kits and materials in the amount of \$50,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 17-141); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-546. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of firearms abroad controlled under Category I of the U.S. Munitions Lists of Colt M16A4 5.56mm fully-automatic rifles to Oman in the amount of \$1,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 18-006); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-547. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles, including technical data and defense services, to Norway to support the manufacture, development, integration, and support for Air-to-Air Pylons for the F-35 Lightning II Aircraft for end-use by the United States in the amount of \$100,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 18-088); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-548. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a petition to add workers who were employed at the Y-12 Plant in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, to the Special Exposure Cohort; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-549. A communication from the Acting Deputy Solicitor, Federal Labor Relations Authority, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of General Counsel, Federal Labor Relations

Authority, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2019; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-550. A communication from the Secretary of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report relative to accomplishments made under the Airport Improvement Program for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-551. A communication from the Deputy Chief, Mobility Division, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "In the Matter of Service Rules for the 698-746, 747-762, and 777-792 Bands" ((WT Docket No. 06-150) (DA 19-77)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2019; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON for the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

*Ronald D. Vitiello, of Illinois, to be an Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security.

*Joseph V. Cuffari, of Arizona, to be Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. TOOMEY (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. ROUNDS, and Mr. PETERS):

S. 733. A bill to protect the investment choices of investors in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. GARDNER, Ms. HASSAN, and Mr. DAINES):

S. 734. A bill to leverage Federal Government procurement power to encourage increased cybersecurity for Internet of Things devices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. UDALL, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. KING, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 735. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require that return information from tax-exempt organizations be made available in a searchable format and to provide the disclosure of the identity of contributors to certain tax-exempt organizations; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. TESTER:

S. 736. A bill proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to clarify the authority of Congress and the States to regulate corporations, limited liability companies, and other corporate entities established by the laws of any State, the United States, or any foreign state; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. ROSEN (for herself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, and Mrs. FISCHER):

S. 737. A bill to direct the National Science Foundation to support STEM education research focused on early childhood; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. Res. 102. A resolution designating April 2019 as "Second Chance Month"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. CRAMER):

S. Res. 103. A resolution designating March 27, 2019, as "National Assistive Technology Awareness Day"; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 25

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 25, a bill to reserve any amounts forfeited to the United States Government as a result of the criminal prosecution of Joaquin Archivaldo Guzman Loera (commonly known as "El Chapo"), or of other felony convictions involving the transportation of controlled substances into the United States, for security measures along the Southern border, including the completion of a border wall.

S. 91

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 91, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize per diem payments under comprehensive service programs for homeless veterans to furnish care to dependents of homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 92

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 92, a bill to amend chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that major rules of the executive branch shall have no force or effect unless a joint resolution of approval is enacted into law.

S. 94

At the request of Mrs. CAPITO, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 94, a bill to amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to facilitate the establishment of additional or expanded public target ranges in certain States.

S. 114

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from Alabama

(Mr. JONES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 114, a bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to provide that activities relating to the training and readiness of the reserve components of the Armed Forces during a lapse in appropriations shall constitute voluntary services that may be accepted by the United States.

S. 211

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 211, a bill to amend the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 to secure urgent resources vital to Indian victims of crime, and for other purposes.

S. 237

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 237, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to permit nurse practitioners and physician assistants to satisfy the documentation requirement under the Medicare program for coverage of certain shoes for individuals with diabetes.

S. 272

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 272, a bill to establish the policy of the United States regarding the no-first-use of nuclear weapons.

S. 296

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 296, a bill to amend XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 317

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 317, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide States with the option of providing coordinated care for children with complex medical conditions through a health home.

S. 506

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 506, a bill to support State, Tribal, and local efforts to remove access to firearms from individuals who are a danger to themselves or others pursuant to court orders for this purpose.

S. 518

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 518, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of certain lymphedema compression treatment items as items of durable medical equipment.

S. 546

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Oregon

(Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 546, a bill to extend authorization for the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund of 2001 through fiscal year 2090, and for other purposes.

S. 554

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 554, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to take actions necessary to ensure that certain individuals may update the burn pit registry with the cause of death of a registered individual, and for other purposes.

S. 559

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 559, a bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to provide leave because of the death of a son or daughter.

S. 580

At the request of Ms. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 580, a bill to amend the Act of August 25, 1958, commonly known as the "Former Presidents Act of 1958", with respect to the monetary allowance payable to a former President, and for other purposes.

S. 590

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 590, a bill to award Congressional Gold Medals to Katherine Johnson and Dr. Christine Darden, to posthumously award Congressional Gold Medals to Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson, and to award a Congressional Gold Medal to honor all of the women who contributed to the success of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration during the Space Race.

S. 634

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 634, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish tax credits to encourage individual and corporate taxpayers to contribute to scholarships for students through eligible scholarship-granting organizations and eligible workforce training organizations, and for other purposes.

S. 642

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 642, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Master Sergeant Rodrick "Roddie" Edmonds in recognition of his heroic actions during World War II.

S. 661

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) were added as cosponsors of S. 661, a bill to provide for enhanced protections for vulnerable alien children, and for other purposes.

S. 662

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 662, a bill to provide access to counsel for unaccompanied alien children.

S. 663

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 663, a bill to clarify the status and enhance the effectiveness of immigration courts, and for other purposes.

S. 665

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 665, a bill to reduce the number of preventable deaths and injuries caused by underride crashes, to improve motor carrier and passenger motor vehicle safety, and for other purposes.

S. 690

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 690, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make the child tax credit fully refundable, establish an increased child tax credit for young children, and for other purposes.

S. 692

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 692, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices.

S. 706

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 706, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require institutions of higher education to disclose hazing incidents, and for other purposes.

S. 717

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 717, a bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act to prohibit the manufacture, processing, and distribution in commerce of asbestos and asbestos-containing mixtures and articles, and for other purposes.

S. 720

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 720, a bill to require the student loan ombudsman of the Department of Education to provide student loan data to the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, and for other purposes.

S. 726

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 726, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to ensure the safety of cosmetics.

S. 728

At the request of Ms. HARRIS, the name of the Senator from Michigan

(Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 728, a bill to direct the Joint Committee on the Library to obtain a statue of Shirley Chisholm for placement in the United States Capitol.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 102—DESIGNATING APRIL 2019 AS “SECOND CHANCE MONTH”

Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 102

Whereas every individual is endowed with human dignity and value;

Whereas redemption and second chances are values of the United States;

Whereas millions of individuals in the United States have a criminal record;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of individuals return to their communities from Federal and State prisons every year;

Whereas neighbors returning to their communities have paid their debt to society after committing a crime but still face significant legal and societal barriers (referred to in this preamble as “collateral consequences”);

Whereas returning individuals face collateral consequences automatically, regardless of—

(1) a nexus between the legal or societal barrier and public safety;

(2) the seriousness of the offense committed;

(3) the time passed since the offense; or

(4) the efforts of the individual to make amends or earn back the trust of the public;

Whereas gaining meaningful employment is one of the most significant predictors of successful reentry into society and reducing future criminal activity;

Whereas many individuals who have previously been incarcerated struggle to find employment because of collateral consequences, which are often not directly related to the offense committed or any proven public safety benefit;

Whereas many States have laws that prohibit an individual with a criminal record from working in certain industries or obtaining professional licenses;

Whereas education has also been shown to be a significant predictor of successful reentry into society;

Whereas an individual with a criminal record often has a lower level of educational attainment than the general population and has significant difficulty acquiring admission to and funding for educational programs;

Whereas an individual convicted of certain crimes is often barred from receiving the financial aid necessary to acquire additional skills and knowledge;

Whereas an individual with a criminal record also often faces collateral consequences in securing a place to live;

Whereas an individual with a criminal record is often barred from seeking access to public housing;

Whereas an individual with a criminal record also often faces other collateral consequences, such as an inability to regain voting rights, volunteer in the community, and secure identification documentation;

Whereas an individual who has been convicted and incarcerated may incur significant debt as a result of the conviction and incarceration;

Whereas collateral consequences prevent millions of individuals in the United States from contributing fully to their families and communities;

Whereas collateral consequences can contribute to recidivism, which increases crime and victimization and decreases public safety;

Whereas the inability to find gainful employment and other collateral consequences of conviction inhibit the economic mobility of an individual with a criminal record, which can negatively impact the well-being of the children and the families of the individual for generations;

Whereas the bipartisan First Step Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–391) was signed into law on December 21, 2018, to increase opportunities for individuals incarcerated in Federal prison to participate in meaningful recidivism reduction programs and prepare for a second chance;

Whereas the Second Chance Act of 2007 (Public Law 110–199; 122 Stat. 657), which has resulted in the provision of reentry services to more than 164,000 individuals in 49 States and the District of Columbia since its enactment, was reauthorized through the First Step Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–391);

Whereas April 21 marks the anniversary of the death of Charles Colson, who used his second chance following his incarceration for a Watergate-related crime to found Prison Fellowship, the largest outreach program to prisoners, former prisoners, and their families in the United States; and

Whereas the designation of April as “Second Chance Month” can contribute to increased public awareness about the impact of collateral consequences, the need for closure for those who have paid their debt to society, and opportunities for individuals, employers, congregations, and communities to extend second chances: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 2019 as “Second Chance Month”;

(2) honors the work of communities, governmental institutions, nonprofit organizations, congregations, employers, and individuals to remove unnecessary legal and societal barriers that prevent an individual with a criminal record from becoming a productive member of society; and

(3) calls upon the people of the United States to observe Second Chance Month through actions and programs that promote awareness of those unnecessary legal and social barriers and provide closure for individuals with a criminal record who have paid their debt to society.

SENATE RESOLUTION 103—DESIGNATING MARCH 27, 2019, AS “NATIONAL ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AWARENESS DAY”

Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. CRAMER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 103

Whereas assistive technology is any item, piece of equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of people with disabilities and older adults;

Whereas the term “assistive technology service” means any service that directly assists a person with a disability or an older adult in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device;

Whereas, in 2018, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that 1 in 4 people in the United States, or almost 61,000,000 individuals, has a disability;

Whereas, in 2017, the Department of Education reported that there were more than 6,700,000 children with disabilities;

Whereas the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that, among adults 65 years of age and older, 2 in 5 have a disability;

Whereas assistive technology allows people with disabilities and older adults to be included in their communities and in inclusive classrooms and workplaces;

Whereas assistive technology devices and services are not luxury items but necessities for millions of people with disabilities and older adults, without which they would be unable to live in their communities, access education, and obtain, retain, and advance gainful, competitive integrated employment;

Whereas the availability of assistive technology in the workplace promotes economic self-sufficiency, enhances work participation, and is critical to the employment of people with disabilities and older adults; and

Whereas State assistive technology programs support a continuum of services that include—

(1) the exchange, repair, recycling, and other reutilization of assistive technology devices;

(2) device loan programs that provide short term loans of assistive technology devices to individuals, employers, public agencies, and others;

(3) the demonstration of devices to inform decision making; and

(4) providing State financing activities to help individuals purchase or obtain assistive technology through a variety of initiatives, such as financial loan programs, leasing programs, and other financing alternatives, that give individuals affordable, flexible options to purchase or obtain assistive technology: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 27, 2019, as “National Assistive Technology Awareness Day”; and

(2) commends—

(A) assistive technology specialists and program coordinators for their hard work and dedication to serving people with disabilities who are in need of finding the proper assistive technology to meet their individual needs; and

(B) professional organizations and researchers who are dedicated to facilitating the access and acquisition of assistive technology for people with disabilities and older adults in need of assistive technology devices.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I have a request for one committee to meet during today's session of the Senate. It has the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to Rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committee is authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Monday, March 11, 2019, at 5:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing on the nomination of Ronald D. Vitiello, of Illinois, to be an Assistant Secretary, and Joseph V. Cuffari, of Arizona, to be Inspector General, both of the Department of Homeland Security.

NATIONAL ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AWARENESS DAY

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 103, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 103) designating March 27, 2019, as "National Assistive Technology Awareness Day."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to proceeding to the measure?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I further ask that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 103) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 729

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I understand that there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

The clerk will read the title of the bill for the second time.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 729) to prohibit the use of funds to Federal agencies to establish a panel, task force, advisory committee, or other effort to challenge the scientific consensus on climate change, and for other purposes.

Mr. BOOZMAN. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 2019

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m. Tuesday, March 12; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, morning business be closed, and the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Matey nomination under the previous order; finally, that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. to allow for the weekly conference meetings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of our Democratic colleagues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Oregon.

CENTRAL AMERICA

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, it was a powerful opportunity to join my colleague from Delaware, Senator CARPER, in traveling to the Northern Triangle of Central America—Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador—to try to understand more about the dynamics in that region, which are driving so many families to come north, to take the difficult journey through Central America, through Mexico, to come to our border and to ask for asylum.

This has been a significant flow, which has expanded greatly. We have seen in the past that most of those arriving on our border were men from Mexico who were seeking work but not so much now. Now we have this flow of families from Central America. These families are traveling to find something better for their lives and for their children's lives. It is not an easy journey, and it is a journey that has created quite a conversation here in the United States of America.

The conversation coming from our President has been this: How do we stop them from asserting asylum at the border?

President Trump has a number of strategies to deter families from coming. His strategy was to separate children from their parents, treat those fleeing as criminals, create great trauma for the children, and use this as a strategy of deterrence. This was first laid out very clearly by John Kelly just months into the administration. In March of 2017, he said: Yes, this is exactly what we are considering.

The administration then proceeded to implement it first as a pilot project and later as an all-out strategy to treat those migrating as criminals, lock up the parents, separate the children, inflict trauma, and deter people from coming. I can state that any strategy that involves mistreating children as a political tactic—a political message of deterrence—is simply evil. It comes from a very, very dark place in the heart of this administration to deliberately injure children in this fashion.

Why doesn't the President look to Central America and ask: What is motivating these families to come? How can we change that motivation? What are the forces at work in that region?

Those were the questions that Senator CARPER and I were undertaking to

answer on our recent trip, and I appreciate so much that he went through the great work of organizing it.

We went first to Guatemala, then to Honduras, then to El Salvador. We met with the President. We met with the incoming President of El Salvador. We met with the civil society organizations—those who understand the roots of what is going on within the society—and here is what we learned. We learned there were three powerful forces driving families to leave those countries: security, economics, and corruption.

Let's talk a little bit about those three things.

Security. I had the chance to meet a woman and her daughter, Gabriella and her baby Andrea. Gabriella told me about her journey. She said that her family took a loan from a private bank, which probably meant a financial loan from the local drug cartel or financial group associated with a drug cartel. The family wasn't able to repay the loan. They were given a deadline. They were told: If you don't repay the loan, one of your family members dies, and that will be you, Gabriella.

Gabriella was pregnant. She figured that as long as she was pregnant, they would not kill her. So when she was 8 months pregnant—1 month ago—she fled the country to save herself and to save her baby.

I met her and her baby on the border. They had just crossed the bridge into the United States of America. I asked her: How did you get past the American border guards, who wouldn't allow anyone across the bridge if they didn't have a passport or visa? Her face lit up for a moment. She said: Well, I was rebuffed time and again at the center of the bridge, not allowed to come across and assert asylum, and I was desperate, blocked on the Mexican side.

Then I saw there was a pedestrian bridge and a car bridge, and on the car bridge were folks who were washing windows for tips. So I asked to use an extra squeegee from one of the window washers, who gave it to me, and I washed windows on the car bridge to get into the United States of America. And there she was at the foot of the bridge with her baby.

She told me that because she fled with her baby, those who were enforcing that private loan from that private bank killed her uncle. That is the security issue that comes with all of the various versions of that story.

I met another woman, Patricia. Patricia had a 14-year-old daughter. Patricia had to pay extortion money. The President of Guatemala told me that every business has to pay extortion money. In this case, though, Patricia had no money left to pay the extortion. So the drug gang—or the gang that controls the streets and runs the extortion—came to her house and assaulted her 14-year-old daughter. So she fled. She fled to protect her daughter from any other such horrific circumstances. She came to the United States.

That is a security issue. This is not a situation where if you don't pay the extortion money, they break your window. This is: If you don't pay the extortion money, we kill you; we rape your daughter; we kill your family—maybe we torture them. That is the security issue.

Then there is the economic issue. In Guatemala, the median age is 18. I believe they said it is the youngest median age on the planet. A huge number of young people are coming into working age, and while they are working to create jobs, they are not possibly creating enough jobs. So you have this huge number of people without jobs. What are they going to do?

I will state that one thing they do is go hungry. Malnutrition is a horrendous demon haunting the country of Guatemala. One individual showed us a picture of Guatemalan children against a wall and their average heights; they had lines across the wall for their heights. They had a similar picture of Guatemalan children being raised in the United States. It was to dramatize the fact that the children growing up in Guatemala at age 9 are 6 inches shorter than the Guatemalan children growing up in the United States at the same age. It is stunting—stunting from persistent malnutrition. So joblessness and malnutrition, an insufficient network of schools and trained schoolteachers—all of these things are economic challenges.

Let me tell you, it is not just the fact that you don't have a job. It is that in your small village across the country—across all three countries—you may see on a street, as was described to us, a shack, a second shack, a third shack, a fourth shack, and then a beautiful house. That beautiful house was there because somebody in that village made it to the United States of America, and they have been sending back money year after year in sufficient quantities that the family is now prosperous. They can build that beautiful house.

That beautiful house stands as a billboard. It is an advertisement for what might happen if you can make it to the United States and get a job. So on the one hand, there are no jobs, and on the other hand, this beacon of hope is saying to you: If you can make it across the border, you might be able to be prosperous yourself and, basically, enable your entire family to be prosperous.

Then we have corruption. This isn't garden variety corruption. For generations—for hundreds of years—there has been a class in these countries that is beyond the law. They call their efforts to change this a campaign against impunity. That is not a word we use a lot in America—"impunity"—but it means individuals who are never touched by the legal system. They can do whatever they want. They pay no fines. They never go to prison. They suck money out of the country. They suck money out of all of those layers of the economy below them. They have become

extraordinarily rich. They talk about the 8 families in Guatemala and the 14 families in El Salvador.

So that corruption we have been working to take on. We, the United States, in partnership with the governments there, have been working to take that on. So those three things—security, the economy, and corruption—are the factors driving people to flee north.

A few years ago, then-Vice President Biden went to Central America to understand those issues better. Out of that came the Alliance for Prosperity—the Alliance for Prosperity—a strategy based on Plan Colombia, as my colleague from Delaware laid out, that would strengthen the programs to take on the security issues, to take on the corruption issues, to take on the economic challenges that are draining those countries so that people didn't feel that to survive, they had to flee north.

We funded this at a modest level in fiscal year 2016. It was \$754 million. Think of that as it compares to money we have been spending on the border—billions and billions and billions of dollars for physical infrastructure, for border security, for high-tech sensors, for a system of courts to adjudicate asylum, all of that. We spent only about three-quarters of a billion dollars to strengthen those three countries.

Along comes the Trump administration, which says that it is concerned—very concerned—about this flow of people coming from Central America to our border, and they propose a 34-percent cut in this program. They propose cutting it from \$754 million to a proposal of \$460 million. Well, the Democrats and Republicans restored funding, put it back, not quite to the \$750 million number but to \$627 million.

The Trump budget came out the next year and cut it again; they proposed a 30-percent cut. Again, here in Congress, we worked to restore those programs, not where they were before but, basically, \$100 million more than the Trump administration asked for.

So to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle: Doesn't it make sense for us to support the Alliance for Prosperity? For each dollar we send, they provide between \$4 and \$7; that is \$4 to \$7 in very poor countries.

Doesn't it make sense to support the commissions against impunity, the commissions against corruption? In the last 2 years, the Trump administration has been undermining these commissions against corruption. Well, that is just wrong.

The result, as you saw in El Salvador, was the election of the mayor of San Salvador, Nayib Bukele, a very young fellow in his thirties. What did he run on? Taking on corruption, taking on impunity. Shouldn't we be a partner with them in this?

If we don't want families to flee north, then we shouldn't want the elite to operate with impunity and suck all

of the resources out of the country and leave people starving. Let's partner with the governments there to take on corruption, not undermine these commissions of support.

A trip to Central America will make you really appreciate our institutions, our economy, our education system, our healthcare system, our court system, our opportunities for our children. We can do far better, for sure, but every piece of what we have that works so much better than those parallel systems in Central America calls out to those there to come and participate in our society. If we want families to stay where they are, they are going to have to have an opportunity where they are, which means we have to take on the security issues, including the street-level extortion. We have to help them take those on. We have to help them improve their economy and their education system. We have to help them take on the systemic, high-level, massive corruption that drives resources into the hands of the very few at the expense of the very many.

That is the mission we should be talking about here on the floor—wrestling with here on the floor. Maybe we shouldn't return to the levels that Obama had that we had passed in a bipartisan way here. Maybe we should do double what was done in 2016—or triple—if we really want to help anchor those societies' rudders that have people fleeing for their lives to come here.

THE EQUALITY ACT

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I speak now to a bill we will introduce this Wednesday, the Equality Act. The Equality Act will be introduced by a group of us in the Senate and by another group led by Congressman CICILLINE in the House.

It is an appropriate moment for us to ponder in this Chamber why this piece of legislation is part of our American journey toward the vision of opportunity for all and why we all should be supporting this beautiful legislative proposal.

My involvement in the Equality Act began in my home State of Oregon, when I was serving in the legislature there, and we had the question of how can we change the systematic discrimination against our LGBTQ brothers and sisters. How can we give them the same opportunity everyone else has?

So we came together and said we should do an Oregon Equality Act, an Oregon Equality Act that would create the same basic protections the Civil Rights Act has for race and gender and ethnicity.

We went about doing that. I was the speaker. I worked very hard to make that happen, and we succeeded. We ended discrimination in Oregon based on who you are or whom you love. Discrimination should be ended across the whole country.

I arrived here in January 2009, and I was assigned to the Health, Education,

Labor, and Pensions Committee—the Health Committee. I asked Senator Kennedy if I could possibly serve on this committee to help fight for health and education and labor, and he arranged that. I will never forget having his voicemail on my phone saying: Yes, you are a member of the committee.

A few months later came the real surprise. Senator Kennedy was struggling with the brain cancer that killed him later that year, and through his team, he asked me to take on one of his civil rights bills, the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

That was to end discrimination for LGBTQ Americans in employment, give them a fair chance to get a job here. Well, this is something that had been part of our Equality Act in Oregon. We had gotten that done, and because I helped lead that fight, he asked me to take over and lead the fight to end employment nondiscrimination.

That was 2009. It took 4 years of work—work with the community and work with our legislators inside this building. Then, finally, in 2013, the time was ripe to put it on the floor and have this debate. This Chamber, with the supermajority, bipartisan vote, said, yes, let's end discrimination in employment, and we passed the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

Then I went over to the House, and it died without consideration. I got together with the advocates and asked, where do we go from here with the House not acting? Do we simply continue to reintroduce the Employment Non-Discrimination Act—which had been first introduced in 1996, first considered on this floor and almost passed just one vote short in 1998. Do we continue to do that?

Out of that conversation, we developed a different vision. Let's do a full Equality Act like Oregon has done, like a number of other States have done and end discrimination not just in one sector or another, not just in places of accommodation, not just in financial transactions, not just in serving on a jury, not just in terms of housing, not just in terms of employment, let's base the Equality Act on providing the full spectrum, the full measure of protection for opportunity.

I thought that was a pretty good idea. Later that year, I introduced the Equality Act in partnership with many others. We laid out that first Equality Act in the Johnson Room—the Johnson Room, which looks out at the Supreme Court and reminds us of 1964. In 1964, when the Civil Rights Act was passed, driven forward by President Johnson, who came from Texas, who came from the South, and said: It is time to end discrimination in the United States of America based on race and gender and ethnicity. He drove that legislation through, and it has been a foundation we haven't questioned since because we know it is right. We know it is part of

this journey of the United States of America going back to our Declaration of Independence, going back to our Constitution—a vision of opportunity for all and liberty for all.

We know it was imperfect, and we have worked now for almost two and a half centuries to perfect that vision of opportunity. Senator Ted Kennedy once said: “The promise of America will never be fulfilled as long as justice is denied to even one among us.” The promise of America—that promise of America that Thomas Jefferson so eloquently put, in 1776—is a vision where we are all created equal, with “unalienable Rights . . . Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

How can that vision be propelled, sustained, and promoted if, in fact, as you pursue your life, the door is slammed shut on you, saying, “No. There is opportunity for that individual but not you,” and the door is slammed shut—liberty for that person but not you, and the door is slammed shut.

We have come to understand that is just wrong. It is completely incompatible with the vision that was laid out, the vision of our Declaration and the vision of our Constitution.

In fact, in this Chamber, we start with a pledge, and we talk about one Nation under God with liberty and justice for all. Classrooms across the country start their day with a pledge of liberty and justice for all, but what is liberty if the door is slammed shut? That is the denial of liberty. That is the opposite of freedom. That is the crushing of opportunity.

So the story of America goes forward. The fight goes forward. We had the 1964 Civil Rights Act that was a culmination itself of decades of work. We had the voting rights struggle during the same time period, and the Voting Rights Act in 1965. We fought a number of battles—battles of discrimination against those with disabilities. We fought for workers' rights, but our LGBTQ brothers and sisters still face discrimination all across this country. We are still in a situation where so many doors are slammed shut.

We have had a lot of progress in the last 10 years. Ten years ago, we had the Defense of Marriage Act, and now we don't. We had don't ask, don't tell in the military, and now we don't. We had only three States that recognized same-sex marriage, and now it is the law of the land as the Supreme Court weighed in and said it is required by the vision of our Constitution.

Discrimination in all kinds of ways is still legal in 29 States—more than half the country. In more than half the country, you can be married in the morning, denied service at a restaurant for lunch, fired from your job in the afternoon, and kicked out of your apartment that night because discrimination is still legal against LGBTQ Americans in 29 States.

LBJ gave a definition of freedom. He said: “Freedom is the right to be treated in every part of our national life as a person equal in dignity and promise to all others.” Discrimination is the opposite of freedom.

Let freedom ring in this Chamber as we introduce the Equality Act later this week. Let freedom ring down the hall as the House of Representatives holds a debate in committee and on the floor in the months to come, and when that freedom bell rings so loudly that they pass that bill, the Equality Act in that Chamber, let them bring it down this hallway right into the Senate; that we might debate the same and put an end to the extraordinary, disgraceful discrimination that still marks the lives and slams the doors shut on millions and millions of Americans every single day.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:27 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, March 12, 2019, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

DAVID BERNHARDT, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR, VICE RYAN ZINKE.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JOHN LINDER, OF GEORGIA, TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS, WITH THE RANK AND STATUS OF AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY.

INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

JENNIFER D. NORDQUIST, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT FOR A TERM OF TWO YEARS, VICE MATTHEW T. MCGUIRE, TERM EXPIRED.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

JOHN MCLEOD BARGER, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE A GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 8, 2021, VICE LOUIS J. GIULIANO, TERM EXPIRED.

THE JUDICIARY

RAINEY R. BRANDT, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE JUDITH NAN MACALUSO, RETIRED.

SHANA FROST MATINI, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSOCIATE JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE ZOE BUSH, RETIRED.

MICHAEL S. BOGREN, OF MICHIGAN, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN, VICE ROBERT HOLMES BELL, RETIRED.

JEFFREY VINCENT BROWN, OF TEXAS, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, VICE MELINDA HARMON, RETIRED.

STEPHANIE DAWKINS DAVIS, OF MICHIGAN, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN, VICE GERALD E. ROSEN, RETIRED.

BRANTLEY STARR, OF TEXAS, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS, VICE SIDNEY A. FITZWATER, RETIRED.